

March 5, 2015

Testimony in Support of Raised Bill No. 976 AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF THE FAIR SALE OF TICKETS TO ENTERTAINMENT EVENTS

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Boise Kimber, President, Connecticut State Missionary Baptist Convention, Pastor, First Calvary Baptist of New Haven and Hartford

Senator Leone, Representative Baram, and members of the General Law Committee,

As a representative of a statewide association of 80 Baptist churches, I urge your **support** of Raised Bill # 976 which directs Commissioner Harris and the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) to study practices in the entertainment ticketing industry that hurt Connecticut's consumers, particularly lower income and minority consumers. Though a study is an important first step towards leveling the rules to protect consumers, I believe there are actions this committee and the legislature should immediately take to protect the rights of consumers that I represent. **This committee should amend this legislation to restrict sellers from requiring credit cards for ticket purchases and pick-ups, as well as allowing for paperless purchasing only when another option allowing for unfettered transferability is also offered and available.**

Currently, ticket sellers may employ a paperless ticketing system that does not allow for independent transferability of paperless tickets, as well as **REQUIRING** the purchaser to provide a credit card to pick up such tickets. In other words, anyone purchasing a ticket to an event would have to provide ID as well as the credit card used to purchase the tickets. For example, if I buy four tickets to an event, and cannot go, or may be late, the other three persons cannot enter the venue until I arrive. Another example, if I purchase tickets for my daughter in the city where she attends college, she will not be able to pick up those tickets without my credit card.

This credit card restriction not only disenfranchises people who may not have a credit card, but also those who do but for reasons may not be able to attend the event they purchased tickets for. This is prejudiced and unfair.

I urge this committee to amend this legislation to: 1) eliminate the ability of ticket sellers to require credit cards for purchases and pick up of tickets, and; 2) allow for paperless only when the purchaser of such tickets are offered the option, to purchase the same tickets in another form that is transferrable.

I think it is important that this committee and legislature takes the position that the requirements of credit cards for purchases and non-transferability of ticket provisions disenfranchise consumers who do not have access to credit cards. When the ticket market is unfairly restricted, additional burdens are added for lower income consumers. This is pretty clear and common sense and does not need a study. This committee can help prevent that.

Please report Raised Bill No. 976 favorably and amend to add language to assist lower income consumers.

I welcome your questions. Please contact me at 203-624-1426 or email drbkimber@gmail.

Suggested Amendment

(a) No person shall deny access to an entertainment event to a ticket holder who possesses valid ticket to such entertainment event based solely on the grounds that such ticket has been transferred.

(b) No person shall employ a ticketing sales system that fails to give the purchaser an option to purchase tickets that the purchaser may transfer to any party, at any price and at any time, without additional fees and without the consent of the person employing such ticketing system.

(c) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (1) of this subsection, a person employing such a ticketing sales system may employ a paperless ticketing system that does not allow for independent transferability of paperless tickets, provided the purchaser of such tickets is offered the option, at the time of initial sale, to purchase the same tickets in another form that is transferrable, at the same price, independent of such a ticketing sales system, including, but not limited to, paper tickets or e-tickets and further provided the price for such tickets is the same, regardless of the form or transferability of such tickets.

(d) No operator of a place of entertainment or such operator's agent shall require the purchaser of a ticket to an entertainment event to choose "will call" as the purchaser's only ticket delivery option or otherwise restrict such purchaser's ability to pick up tickets from a box office or will call window in advance of such event, including, but not limited to, requiring the purchaser to provide a credit card to pick up such tickets. Nothing in this section shall prohibit such operator or agent from requiring a ticket purchaser to pick up tickets during a box office's normal business hours.